Editorial Rooms of the CHRISTIAN UNION,

No. 27 PARK PLACE,

HENRY WARD BEECHER, Editor.
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(and 24 & 26 Murray Street.)

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My dear Garrison,

Your letters are both received.

The one in relation to the autobiography is going into type to-day. I had fondly hoped that you would be able to give stronger assurances than you do, of a will and purpose to undertake the proposed work. I very much fear, from what you say, that my efforts in the matter are likely to prove fruitless. In your present state of health, perhaps, it would be unreasonable to expect that you will undertake such a work; I only wish I could hope that a partial restoration of bodily vigor would ensure the fulfilment of the earnest desire of your friends. It is my firm belief that, if you

would only once begin, the obstacles that loom up before your mind so portentously would quickly recede. If your memory were as strong as ~~that~~ of some men, you would be in danger of going too much into detail and spoiling your work by its cumbrousness. It is not necessary that you should remember the incidents ironically recorded in a diary. If, at almost any time, you will sit down to write the story of your birth and boyhood, you will find yourself remembering, I am sure, nearly all that ought in any case to make a part of that story. I think you would, yourself, become interested in the narrative, and find it running from your pen with great ease and naturalness. As for the later periods of your life, the files of the Liberator and countless books and pamphlets within your reach, would refresh your recollection and offer invaluable suggestions and hints.

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It will not be important to make your autobiography an embodiment of the history of the Anti-Slavery Movement. You need only concern yourself with your own agency in that movement — the circumstances that led you to undertake it — the growth of that movement upon your own mind — the crises through which you passed, etc. The narrative should be very plain, frank, and simple, not padded in the least with extracts from your writings, or with documents of any sort. You would naturally speak of your hopes, at the outset, of finding an ally in the Church and the Ministry — of your disappointment in this respect, and the attitude you were constrained to take toward them in conde-

grievance, etc. The attitude you assumed in relation to politics would also have to be explained — the reasons for advocating a dissolution of the Union, etc. The reasons of your opposition to the Colonization Society — your journey to England, etc., would also require notice and treatment. In regard to all these things. I am sure you will be able to recollect all that is desirable. Now I wish I could persuade you to undertake the work, instead of yielding to obstacles that exist mainly in your imagination. Plunge into the biographical stream, and you will not feel the dreaded chill, but enjoy the bath.

I have not to this day seen any report of what you said about the Whittier petition. Your letter gives me light I had not before seen. The newspapers deceive even me. Still, I am sorry that you even seemed to oppose the petitioners on any ground.

I am, my dear Garrison,

Yours heartily, Oliver Johnson.